AN

APOLOGY

FOR THE

CLERGY.

[Price One Shilling.]

694. k. 10.
12

AN

APOLOGY

FOR THE

CLERGY.

IN WHICH THE

REASONING and UTILITY

OF THE

Biſhop of *London*'s late CHARGE,

ARE IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED.

To which is added,

A PROPOSAL to make RESIDENCE more general than by the Enforcement of POPISH CANONS or STATUTES.

In a LETTER to Lord ——

By R. JOHNSON, D.D.
Sometime Fellow of *St. John's College, Oxford.*

LONDON,
Printed for H. PAYNE at *Dryden's Head, Paternoſter-Row.*
M DCC LIX.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

AN

APOLOGY

FOR THE

CLERGY.

My Lord,

WHEN you ſent me the Biſhop of London's late Charge to his Clergy, and commanded me to give your Lordſhip my thoughts upon it with freedom and ſincerity, I am perſuaded you did not expect the trouble of ſuch a letter as you are now doomed to receive. But your Lordſhip cannot be more ſurprized at this, than I was at the Charge which you did me the honour to ſend.

I had always a great idea of the abilities and acuteneſs of Biſhop Sherlock: and as his Lordſhip had thought it neceſſary to exert himſelf at this juncture, notwithſtanding his great age and infirmities, by printing a Charge to his Clergy, I took it for granted it muſt contain ſomething very extraordinary. I concluded that the ſubject matter of it was adapted to ſome important exigence in his dioceſe which required his interpoſition in this way; or, at leaſt, that it held out ſome new lights for our inſtruction in the common Duties of the Paſtoral Office.

The Circumſtances of ſuch a Dioceſe as That of London, which comprehends the moſt reſpectable Body of Clergy in the Kingdom, and which is the great theatre of our national follies and iniquities, it is eaſy enough to imagine, may call for the abilities and the learning of the Biſhop who is at the head of it, on many occaſions almoſt peculiar to itſelf. For this reaſon I preſume it was, that the late excellent Biſhop Gibſon ſent out ſo many paſtoral letters, which do him honour, and ſpeak his praiſes, at this day. For the ſame reaſon, I muſt own, when I ſaw a charge advertized as delivered by the preſent Biſhop to his Clergy, I had raiſed my expectations of ſomething very edifying

ſying and important ; of ſomething ſuitable to the manners and principles of the times, (tho' not according to the late affected eſtimation of them) and which would well become his ſtation, his parts, and learning.

The great encreaſe and ſucceſs of Methodiſm and Popery, in the Metropolis, are real evils ; and they are evils of that ſort, which it ſeems the more immediate duty of a Biſhop of *London* to attempt to remove, than any other Biſhop. I believe therefore that every one who was acquainted with this fact, when they ſaw the charge advertized, concluded that theſe were the principal points diſcuſſed in the performance. Your Lordſhip, I remember, told me, that it was rumoured Biſhop Sherlock was writing againſt the Methodiſts : others ſaid that he was employed in vindicating his *Diſcourſes*, which had been attacked with ſome acuteneſs by Mr. Bulkley, and which none of his Chaplains had anſwered for him. It was not therefore without great impatience that I waited for this production, whatever it was, which the Publick had been led to expect from my Lord of London.

At laſt it came out under the title of " a charge " delivered to the clergy of his dioceſe." I did not cavil, as moſt people did, at this title ; tho' I

confeſs it ſtruck me as ſomething odd and unaccountable, that it ſhould be ſaid to be delivered to the Clergy by his Lordſhip, when he was utterly incapable of any ſuch diſcharge of his office. But to let that paſs with your Lordſhip for what it may, I am not able to expreſs my ſurprize at the ſubject on which it treats; the *Non-reſidence of the Clergy*. To ſay the truth, my Lord, I was not only ſurprized beyond expreſſion, to find this the ſubject of Biſhop Sherlock's Charge, which has been the common-place topic to Enthuſiaſts and Puritans in every age, but I could not help feeling ſome concern, to ſee a great man who has attain'd to all that he could aſpire to, laying out his time, when he was dropping into the Grave, on a ſtale threadbare ſubject, which has no other tendency than to abaſe his order (low enough, God knows, already) and which even reflects no honour on his own former conduct, when he was a private Clergyman. I ſhould naturally indeed have concluded, that the great age of the Biſhop had impaired his underſtanding, and that his mind had ſhared the weakneſs and imperfections of his body. But we are told by one of his Archdeacons *, in a charge

* Ibbotſon, Archdeacon of St. Alban's.

poſterior

poſterior to his Lordſhip's, "that length of days "hath not enfeebled the ſuperior powers of his mind."

You will give me leave then, my Lord, ſince this is the caſe, to examine into the merits of the performance; and, as his Lordſhip has been thought to bear a little hard on his own order, to attempt to retrieve their honour. You know that I have always had a regard for the honour and intereſt of my profeſſion, not only in what I have ſaid, but what I have done: and as I have conſtantly reſided all my life, in the ſeveral pariſhes I have been preſented to, except a few years in one which my health did not permit me, I am not a party concerned in this diſpute; and it is not to vindicate myſelf, but the common cauſe of the clergy, attacked by ſo great a man, that I now enter the Liſts. Your Lordſhip I know will give me a fair hearing, notwithſtanding the prejudice of a great name againſt me, and of an argument which carries an appearance of extraordinary zeal for religion. The Biſhop's own manner of diſcuſſing a controverſial ſubject, when he was a clergyman himſelf, againſt the then Biſhop of Bangor, will juſtify my examining his Lordſhip's ſentiments with freedom and impartiality.

However, I hope I ſhall not ſo far forget myſelf in this examination, as to be wanting in any reſpect which the Biſhop has a right to from every clergyman. I honour the high ſtation he holds in the church of England; I reverence his knowledge and learning; and I have no pleaſure nor vanity in differing from his Lordſhip in any article whatever. But Truth is not to be given up to pay our court to men in power; at leaſt your Lordſhip knows that I could never bring myſelf to ſuch a mean and abject ſubmiſſion: and I am ſo far from thinking it indecent for Me to defend in Eccleſiaſticks, what the Laity have been always taught by their Enemies to condemn, that I think the ſcandal lies with Thoſe, who, for the ſake of popularity, or that they may ſafely neglect all the parts of their own duty, have applied to the preſent practice of Non-reſidence, the Exclamations which were raiſed againſt That which obtained in the Church of Rome. His Lordſhip, it muſt be owned, ſtands clear of this ſcandal: he joins in no ſuch exclamations; and contents himſelf with preſſing the ſtatutes which make it penal; and had this remonſtrance of the Biſhop's been confined to thoſe lazy and luxurious churchmen, who take the Sacred Office upon them for the ſake of its Emoluments,

ments, without executing it at all, or on ſome great occaſions only, the Remonſtrance would have been juſt; and it is incumbent on every Biſhop, to ſee that ſuch non-reſidence is not practiſed in his dioceſe.

Your Lordſhip will give me leave to illuſtrate what I ſay, by a quotation from ſome letters to a young Clergyman, lately publiſhed, under the Title of "Advice from a Biſhop;" which I would recommend to every Biſhop, and to every clergyman in the world. The paſſage I mean is this. "I do "not know ſo little of the world and of human "affairs, as, like many well-meaning people, to "inveigh againſt pluralities and non-reſidence. "They are neceſſary, as things were left at the "reformation, in a proteſtant Church; neither "ſhall I require from you all that may be wiſhed "for, only what may be expected in this degene-"rate age. You are therefore to reſide ſomewhere "as a clergyman, and to exerciſe with diligence the "office you have taken upon you; not to put in "a ſubſtitute over thoſe whom Providence hath "committed to your care, and to take the care "of no others upon yourſelf that you may indulge "in eaſe and luxury.——A matter of ill deſert and "ſcandal indeed it is, and what you know I never

" permitted in my dioceſe, for the Clergy to live " in the capital of the kingdom, above half the " year it may be, doing nothing, and having no- " thing to do, but to indulge themſelves in amuſe- " ments and idle curioſity, or to frequent the levees " of the Great for the ſake of more preferment †."

Your Lordſhip will be induced, I hope, by this quotation, to look into the tract itſelf; which you will find to contain a great many things of ſome conſequence which are not to be met with any where elſe. The Non-reſidence here exclaimed againſt is what no good man will practice, nor any ſerious man will attempt to vindicate. But if your Lordſhip will look again into the charge, you will ſee that this is not the Biſhop's meaning. The Biſhop intends throughout, to enforce the duty of reſidence upon the ſame benefice to which every clergyman has been admitted; and as I have not the honour to agree with him in theſe ſentiments, I muſt now, in obedience to your Lordſhip's commands, proceed to ſhew you the reaſons why I differ from him.

The firſt proof of the duty of conſtant reſidence on our ſeveral cures, exhibited in the charge, is

† Advice from a Biſhop: in a ſeries of letters to a young Clergyman. 1759. pag. 34, 35, 36.

" from

" from the nature of the office we have under-
" taken." If his Lordſhip means by this, a conſtant diſcharge of our duty ſomewhere——as the Author juſt quoted does——without reſtraining it to the particular benefices we are preſented to, I will allow all his reaſoning upon this head to be proper and concluſive; neither ſhall I pretend to combat the propoſition, as it has ever been as much my own way of thinking as it is the Biſhop of London's. But I muſt again remind your Lordſhip, that this is not his meaning nor deſign in the Charge before us. The whole purport of this charge, is to enjoin reſidence in the very pariſh to which we are inſtituted. All his quotations therefore from Scripture, and all his reaſoning on the " Nature of our office" from them, I muſt take the liberty to obſerve to your Lordſhip, prove nothing at all to the purpoſe which they are brought to prove. They will, and do prove our duty to attend upon the people committed to our care: but the nature, and, I believe, the original intention of our office, deſcribed as the Biſhop gives it us in Scripture language, do not require us to confine ourſelves to one particular pariſh. They only require clergymen to employ themſelves always in ſome Church, or Flock; but not to tie themſelves

down to a ſmall inconſiderable cure, when their abilities perhaps are equal to the largeſt and moſt reſpectable.

There is a paſſage in the Church Hiſtory of England, lately publiſhed by Dr. Warner, which ſupports what I have ſaid about Non-reſidence, from the nature of our office; and which I ſhall therefore take the liberty to produce. "As to the buſineſs of reſidence, it may be obſerved, that the "Good of the Church, either is, or ſhould be, the "great object in all national councils: and it was "not thought the moſt certain way of promoting "this good in the firſt inſtitution of parochial "cures, and I am ſure it cannot now be proved to "be ſo, that they ſhould in all caſes be ſupplied "by the incumbent himſelf in perſon. A prieſt "was not ordained to ſerve only one particular "pariſh, but the Church of Chriſt; nor was any "thing more intended by the foundation and endowment of parochial churches, or even by this "canon, than that ſome clergyman ſhould be reſident at every church to diſcharge the cure of "Souls. It may be much more for the intereſt "of the Church, and of Religion, that men of "learning and abilities ſhould officiate in large and "reſpectable congregations, or attend the Service

of

" of Cities at Cathedrals, than that they ſhould be " obliged to attend perſonally in their own pariſhes, " on the inſtruction, it may be, of a few Mecha- " nics or Ruſtics, who may learn as much as they " are capable of from the meaneſt curate. I have " thought it neceſſary to ſay thus much, not in " excuſe of Eccleſiaſtics who are above doing the " duties of their ſacred function, and engroſs reve- " nues in the church to indulge in eaſe and luxu- " ry; but to remove the prejudices of thoſe, who " taking advantage of this canon, contend againſt " all Non-reſidence as ſcandalous and inconvenient: " not conſidering that nothing more is required of " a clergyman, than that he ſhould be able to " give a general good account of his charge, that " he ſhould be diligent in the offices of his call- " ing ſomewhere——no matter in what particu- " lar place——and exemplary in his converſa- " tion ‡."

I have no doubt but that your Lordſhip will acquieſce in the ſolidity and the juſtneſs of theſe reflections; which of themſelves are ſufficient, in my opinion, to overturn all that has been advanced by the learned prelate. But I muſt remember the

‡ Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of England, Vol. I. p. 473.

commands your Lordſhip gave me to examine it very clearly, and not to avail myſelf of what had been already written in general on the other ſide of the ſubject; I ſhall therefore return again to the examination of the Biſhop's charge. Amidſt ſo much canon and ſtatute learning produced upon this occaſion, I was much ſurprized to find his Lordſhip illuſtrating his ſentiments of the duty of perſonal reſidence, reſulting from the "nature of the paſ-"toral office," with the Metaphor of "a Pilot, "agreed with to conduct a ſhip to the Eaſt-Indies, "who muſt neceſſarily reſide in the ſhip during the "voyage." Your Lordſhip, I dare ſay, will allow with Me, that it is a matter of ſurprize indeed, to find the Biſhop of London either weak in his arguments, or in the manner in which he applies them; and I believe he is never thus to be caught, but when, for ſome reaſon or other, he has taken the wrong ſide of a queſtion.

You, my Lord, and other Laymen, perhaps will not grant, that a prieſt is ſo neceſſary, at this time of the world, to conduct a pariſh to heaven, as a pilot is to conduct a ſhip to the Eaſt-Indies; and ſo from thence may conclude, that the metaphor will not hold. But if your Lordſhip ſhould not incline to deny this, and ſhould allow the metaphor

phor to be well choſen, yet I hope the Biſhop will forgive me if I preſume to deny the application of it. If we agree with a pilot "that he ſhall conduct "a ſhip to the Eaſt-Indies," we agree that it ſhall be conducted by that very pilot himſelf; and then it is moſt certain he muſt reſide in the ſhip. But ſuppoſing that the agreement with a pilot, is, that the ſhip ſhall be conducted ſafely to the Eaſt-Indies, and he ſhould ſubſtitute another perſon as well ſkilled in navigation as himſelf, or at leaſt as able to conduct the ſhip to port, would not "the eſſen-"tial part of the contract," as his Lordſhip owns it is, be juſt as well performed by him, as if he himſelf had reſided in her? Therefore if we ſhould allow the Biſhop his metaphor it will ſignify nothing at all. Becauſe when a Clergyman accepts a benefice, there is no ſtipulation generally by the patron who preſents, that he ſhall himſelf reſide there; and he is left at his liberty, either to ſerve the pariſh himſelf, or to appoint a curate in his ſtead. Indeed if there is a contract for his ſerving it in his own perſon, he is bound as much to reſide among the people committed to his care, as the pilot is to abide in the ſhip which he has undertaken to conduct: but then the obligation to reſidence, your Lordſhip ſees, is by virtue of this particular

agreement between the patron and the Clerk; and not, as the Biſhop ſays the Canoniſts hold, "a duty "deducible by the divine law."

For it hath been long ago obſerved, "that if we "peruſe the Bible from one end to the other, we "ſhall find no directions about reſidence; no men- "tion being made therein of parochial prieſts, or "parochial cures, nor indeed could be; ſince the "firſt inſtitution of them was made long after the "writing thoſe ſacred oracles *." The Spaniſh Biſhops and Divines indeed in the Council of Trent, for reaſons which I need not tell this learned prelate ——but they were not reaſons of conſcience——endeavoured to get reſidence declared to be of *divine right*; but their attempts, for the ſame ſort of reaſons, were fruſtrated by the majority of that Council. However, as his Lordſhip has too much good ſenſe to puſh this part of the argument, I ſhall not give you or myſelf any further trouble about it; and will proceed to what the Biſhop advances next in favour of reſidence from the law of the Church.

"Since the dividing of Dioceſes into pariſhes, "and the appointing a particular curate to every "particular pariſh, the bounds of this duty have

* Defence of Pluralities, 1692. pag. 17.

"been

" been contracted.——Under this reſtriction, the " provincial conſtitutions of the Church, and the " laws of the Realm, conſider reſidence as a per- " petual duty; and every non-reſident Rector or " Vicar of a pariſh, is, primâ faciê, criminal in the " eye of both laws, till he ſhows a legal diſpenſa- " tion to juſtify or excuſe himſelf †." This is a heavy charge, your Lordſhip will tell me, againſt all my brethren, who have not legal diſpenſations; and what the adverſaries of the clergy will rejoice to hear. But with humble ſubmiſſion, I hope to make it appear, that this accuſation, like many others which are brought againſt them, is without foundation: an accuſation, which, if true, will fall not a little hard upon Dr. Sherlock; and which the Biſhop methinks therefore ſhould not have brought.

I muſt deſire your Lordſhip to obſerve, before I go any further, becauſe the whole merits of the cauſe will turn upon it, that the *general Good of the Church*, is the firſt, and principal point, to be conſidered, in the exerciſe of the duties of the paſtoral office: and if any canons or ſtatutes have not had this Good for their object, they have been inſtituted to a wrong and unrighteous purpoſe. But

† Charge, p. 4, 5.

it was confeſſedly with a view to promote this general good, that the Endowment and Diſtribution of dioceſes and pariſhes took place in England, as well as in the Chriſtian Church at large. A care and proviſion for particular pariſhes, which was not, as his Lordſhip obſerves, till long after the endowment and diviſion of dioceſes, was therefore ſtill ſubſervient to the primary deſign, the general Good of the Church; and was always ſubmitted to the wiſdom of the Biſhop to be conducted or altered at his Diſcretion. Thus if it is more for the intereſt of religion, and the general good of the Church, that any particular Clergyman ſhould be non-reſident on his benefice, then it is certainly more agreeable to the nature of our office, and the firſt intention of Endowments, that his abſence ſhould be diſpenſed with, than that it ſhould not; and the care and convenience of one particular pariſh, is not ſo much to be regarded as the good of the Church in general. Beſides, in this caſe your Lordſhip muſt obſerve, the care and convenience of every pariſh are not neglected; becauſe the ſervice is to be performed by a Curate, whom the Biſhop is to approve and licence. Nay perhaps the care and convenience of a Pariſh thus ſupplied, is better conſulted, than by the reſidence of the proper Rector

Rector or Vicar himself. As odd as this assertion may seem to your Lordship, you will find it very true when you are informed, that a Rector or Vicar retains his parish for life; and is neither to be refused nor displaced at the Bishop's pleasure, if he is unworthy: but every Bishop may refuse a Curate, or remove him, if he judges his life or learning unsuitable to the parish he is appointed to. Your Lordship, I believe, will agree with me further, that the care of a country parish is more consulted by the residence of a Curate, whose learning and abilities are nearly upon a level with its inhabitants, than by that of a Rector whose compositions would be much too high for their understandings; and I am sure it is more for the interest of Religion, and the Church in general, that such Rectors should be employed in large and learned Congregations. I need go no further for a proof of this assertion, than to the Bishop himself. You and I, my Lord, and every body else, I believe, will allow, that the great abilities and the shining talents of Dr. Sherlock, were much better employed, more for the service of the Church and of Religion, by his preaching always at the Temple, than if he had resided at his living of Therfield in Hertfordshire.

But to come more to the point, let us ſee how this caſe ſtands in the law of the Church. Your Lordſhip need not be told, I believe, that the true way to interpret the words of any canons, ſtatutes or conſtitutions, is by the *intention* with which they were firſt made or paſſed; and without knowing the ſpirit and deſign of laws, we ſhall make wretched work of their conſtruction. The firſt conſtitutions in England, relating to reſidence on Cures, were paſſed in a national Synod in the thirteenth century, held at London; and which, notwithſtanding the change at the reformation, are now ſtill in force, and make part of our canon-law. But then in order for your Lordſhip to form a right underſtanding of the particular conſtitution enjoining reſidence, which was paſſed in this ſynod, it is neceſſary that I ſhould inform you of the ſtate of Religion and the Church of England at that time.

Matthew Paris, an Eccleſiaſtick then alive, has told us in his hiſtory, that the privileges of the Engliſh Church were in a manner loſt, and that inſtead of Clergymen of worth and character, who were a credit to their country, and ſpent their preferments here in hoſpitality, they were peſtered now with looſe obſcure people, little better than

ſervants

ſervants to the court of Rome, who came over and gleaned up the wealth of England, intended by their pious Anceſtors for other men and other purpoſes, and carried it away to ſupport the pride and luxury of their maſters. In the ſame age we are told, that a Nuntio brought a liſt of 300 Italians to be preferred to the vacant benefices, with an order to the Biſhops not to admit any eccleſiaſticks to preferment, till all the foreigners were provided for: and in a parliament held at that time, it was complained of as one of the grievances of the nation, that in the Churches filled by theſe Italians, there were neither alms nor preaching, and the care of Souls was quite neglected.

Theſe, my Lord, were the corruptions which gave riſe to the conſtitutions enjoining reſidence: and to uſe the words of the Church-hiſtorian abovementioned, "Whoever takes up a prejudice againſt "non-reſidence in general, as it is practiſed at pre-"ſent in the Church of England, from any canons "or ſtatutes paſſed in that age againſt it, may per-"haps ſee his abſurdity, when he conſiders that in "thoſe times, if an incumbent was non-reſident, "the pariſh was without any miniſter at all, to in-"ſtruct, or to officiate; and had not, as in theſe "days, a Curate ſubſtituted in his ſtead. The

" difference is ſo eſſential, that the caſes are not " the ſame; and yet becauſe the ſame name ſtill " continues, men have been weak enough to argue " from one to the other ‡."

Your Lordſhip may conclude, from this ſtate of the Church and Religion at that time, that if there had been no other ſort of non-reſidence than there is at preſent, that is, if there had been a Curate to officiate in every pariſh, we had never heard of this conſtitution againſt it; and conſequently, that every non-reſident Rector or Vicar is not now criminal in the eye of that law, as the Biſhop announces him, which was made with no other view, than to prevent the total neglect of pariſhes; becauſe if every ſuch Rector or Vicar appoints a ſubſtitute in his ſtead———and it is the fault of his Biſhop if he does not———That neglect is avoided, and the purpoſes of the Canon are fully anſwered. Beſides, from the hiſtory of the foundation and endowment of parochial Churches in England, it does not appear, " that in their firſt deſign they re- " quired a perſonal diſcharge of the parochial duty " by the perſon inſtituted; but only that every " pariſh ſhould be provided for in ſpirituals, by

‡ Warner's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of England, Vol. I. p. 543.

" ſome

" ſome miniſter or other authorized by the Biſhop;
" whether Chaplain, Vicar or Curate; and indeed,
" at that time and for ſome ages after, all theſe
" names were uſed indifferently ‡."

I will next endeavour to prove to your Lordſhip, that a non-reſident Clergyman is no more criminal in the eye of the laws of the realm, than of the Church; and if the foundation of the Biſhop's building is taken away, the ſuperſtructure muſt fall of courſe. Your Lordſhip, I know, is not ſo great a Stranger to the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of your country, as not to remember the ſeveral conteſts between the heads of a party who were for a reformation, and the Clergy who oppoſed it, till by the paſſions and intereſt of Harry the Eighth, theſe Conteſts ended in a total ſeparation from the Church of Rome. I ſhall therefore content myſelf with juſt reminding your Lordſhip, that the uſe of parliaments having been diſcontinued for ſeven years by the advice of Cardinal Wolſey, the King, that he might eſtabliſh a good underſtanding between him and his people, which he ſtood much in need of, on the diſgrace of that miniſter, ordered a parliament to be called. The doctrines of Luther had

‡ Defence of Pluralities, p. 114.

made a great progreſs then in England, and the whole Eccleſiaſtical order was very ſeverely treated. Many members of this parliament were much inclined to the new doctrines, and were conſequently no friends to the Clergy of that time. If the King ſtood in need of the affections of his people, to enable him to withſtand the Emperor and the Pope, he ſtood in need of the affections of his parliament ſtill more: and perceiving that the way to ingratiate himſelf with both was to regulate the abuſes which had crept into the Church, his Majeſty recommended an examination of them to the houſe of Commons. The houſe of Commons, who were moſt of them tinctured with the new opinions, proceeded with great vigour againſt pluralities and non-reſidence; the King uſed his influence in favour of theſe bills; and in the end they paſſed the houſe of Lords, and had the royal aſſent.

This, my Lord, is the hiſtory of the laws of the Realm, which at this day reſtrain the pluralities, and regulate the non-reſidence of the Engliſh Clergy. Your Lordſhip will ſee from hence, that the laws, as well as the canons, "*have in general* "*outlived the reaſons upon which they were intro-* "*duced:*" and it was therefore matter of great ſurprize to Me, to find the Biſhop of London enforcing

forcing anew upon his proteſtant Clergy, the laws which were contrived againſt the Clergy of the Church of Rome. Hard enough, my Lord, is our caſe already, who are allowed to marry, and for the moſt part have families to be provided for, when the neceſſaries of life too are more expenſive than in former ages, that we ſhould be tied down, in any degree, with laws that were enacted againſt a ſett of men, who held pluralities without limits, and benefices without curates, though they were reſtrained from marrying, and had only themſelves to be taken care of!

The general Good of the Church, and the intereſt of Religion, did moſt certainly require theſe laws and conſtitutions in the ſituation of affairs in that time. But conſidering the great alteration that they have ſince undergone, and circumſtanced in every point as we are at preſent, it is ſo far from being to the intereſt of Religion, and the general Good of the Church, to put theſe laws in force to their utmoſt rigour, that I am very ready to prove, the neceſſities of the Clergy would thereby become pernicious and ſcandalous to both. Inſtead therefore of reviving theſe Popiſh canons and ſtatutes, for ſuch they were, if the good old Biſhop had laid out the little remainder of his time,

in ſome attempts to relieve the diſtreſſes, and to better the condition of his poor inferior brethren, your Lordſhip muſt allow that it would have been in character, and that he would alſo have conſulted the honour of the Church of England, and the intereſt of Religion in it.

The diſtreſſes of his poor brethren, God knows, are many and various; and with all the ſhifts that can be made, from the aid of Pluralities and Non-reſidence, as they are obliged to ſubſtitute curates in their ſtead (which anſwers all the purpoſes of the canons and ſtatutes) they are moſt of them in a condition truly pitiable. What will ſuch poor clergy think, who can barely ſubſiſt themſelves in a mean uncomfortable manner, without being able to lay up a ſingle farthing for their families; What will they ſay, when they ſee their enemies availing themſelves of the authority of an aged prelate, *poſſeſſed of immenſe wealth and without any family*, in order to make their diſtreſſes ſtill more intolerable? There is no need for me to tell your Lordſhip, what they think, and what they ſay: but it is a matter, in my opinion, for the Biſhop to conſider, whether, when the *Spirit* of the Law is anſwered, the execution of its *Letter*

ſhould

ſhould be preſſed on the inferior clergy, too poor already, to make them poorer, and leſs uſeful.

We muſt now, my Lord, proceed to the caſe of diſpenſations; "which are ſuppoſed," the Biſhop ſays, "to be founded in the general conſideration "of the Good of the Church:" and under this head, I muſt obſerve, that his Lordſhip, who has before been preſſing an obſervance of the laws and canons according to the *letter*, in the caſe of diſpenſations has quite deſerted it; and enforces only the *reaſon* and *meaning* of the ſtatute, and the *end* intended by it. But whatever are the Biſhop's preſent Sentiments upon this point, we have all the reaſon in the world, my Lord, to conclude, that he himſelf was for many years of opinion, that a diſpenſation for reſidence, according to the *letter* of the law, was a title to an exemption, under which he might "ſcreen himſelf with a good conſcience." I will explain to your Lordſhip what I mean.

The Biſhop, in his charge, recites the caſes, in which a diſpenſation for Reſidence is allowed by the canon and ſtatute law: and it is manifeſt, he ſays, "from the reaſon of theſe caſes, that a diſ-"penſation for reſidence, is by no law permitted "to be granted as a favour to any perſon." Amongſt others he mentions thoſe of the Chaplains

of the Nobility, and in the ſervice of the Crown; and he tells us the reſtriction under which the exemption is granted in both theſe.

In the firſt caſe, his Lordſhip ſays, "it extends "not to all Chaplains of the Nobility in general, "but to ſuch only as are daily attending, abiding, "and remaining in their honourable Houſeholds; "and for ſuch time only, as ſuch Chaplains ſhall "abide and dwell, without fraud, and covin, in "any of the ſaid honourable Houſeholds." In the other caſe, he ſays, "that the Statute has ex-"empted even the King's Chaplains from the pe-"nalty of Non-reſidence, ſo long only as they "ſhall be attending on the King's Houſehold *." In theſe, and all other caſes, "the terms of the "law muſt be purſued, beyond which there is no-"thing for any clergyman to aſk, nothing for any "Biſhop to grant †."

Now the anſwer to all this, my Lord, ſhall be *ad Hominem*; and will fully juſtify what I have ſaid, that theſe were not always his Lordſhip's ſentiments on this head. It is a fact well known to the world, that the Biſhop had the living of Therfield in Hertfordſhire, I believe I ſpeak within compaſs if I ſay

* Charge, p. 10, 11. † Ibid. p. 38.

about

about thirty years; and yet in all the time that he was Rector of that parish, be it more or less, he never resided there in the manner that he now requires from all his Clergy. Your Lordship will suppose perhaps that he had a legal dispensation, according to his own interpretation of it at present, to excuse his non-residence as a parish priest. Nothing like it: but he availed himself of the letter of the Law, and I suppose he was not condemned by his own conscience. He was Master of the Temple, and Chaplain to the King; and some part of the time, was Dean of Chichester. The Mastership of the Temple confers no title or exemption from Residence, either by the *letter* or the *meaning* of canon, or statute Law: the Chaplainship to the King excused residence "so long "only as he was attending in the Household;" which we all know to be but one month out of twelve: the Deanery of Chichester exempted him by the Canon Law for only ninety days in a year, which were to be spent upon that dignity: and "the enacting part of the statute," he says, "re-"quires that every Dean, Dignitary, Parson, or "Vicar, be constantly resident, in, at, and upon "his dignity or benefice *."

* Charge, p. 13.

Should

Should your Lordſhip be inclined to aſk, whether Dr. Sherlock did not reſide upon his Benefice, as the Biſhop ſays the laws of the Church and the Realm require, I ſhall preſume to anſwer for him that he did not: and though the flattering Archdeacon abovementioned tells us, that "the Biſhop "has great authority to enforce thoſe rules for our "conduct which have been the invariable meaſure "of his own," yet if his Lordſhip meant to enforce no other reſidence on the Clergy, than what he himſelf obſerved on his living of Therfield, then, I am very ſorry to ſay it, the whole of his Charge muſt be deemed unneceſſary.

It is no difficult matter, my Lord, to make objections to the conduct of other people, and to diſplay the corruptions that have obtained in large bodies of men: but with all the ſhew of zeal that we may aſſume, it is not ſo eaſy to cover our own conduct, nor to keep it out of remembrance. Nay a great appearance of zeal and ſeverity againſt others, and an attempt to reform our profeſſion, will naturally put men upon enquiring what our own behaviour in it has been. This, however, I can aſſure your Lordſhip, has proved the conſequence of the Biſhop's charge. It has put many others, as well as Me, upon recollecting what his Lordſhip's particular

ticular reſidence for ſo many years upon his benefice, and his exemption from it were; and the reſult of this recollection you have ſeen above. But the Clergy thus attack'd, my Lord, will not ſtop here: they go further than this and ſay, that ſince the publiſhing this very charge, the Biſhop has given to the Chaplain, who delivered it to the Clergy for him, the great and important living of St. James's, Weſtminſter; who has another good living beſides *, and who is ſtill notwithſtanding to reſide himſelf it ſeems at the Temple, and to ſerve St. James's generally by a Subſtitute. He does not abide with the Biſhop to excuſe his reſidence according to the Canon Law: he has no title to the exemption of the Statute, as Chaplain to the King, but for one month in the year: he has neither the letter nor the meaning of any law to exempt him from reſidence on both his livings; and in truth he has no other reaſon or pretence for his non-reſidence, but what every other clergyman may plead, who conſtantly does duty. Though This indeed is a good reaſon for moſt clergymen to give, yet if there ſhould be one, who beſides a

* What the value of theſe two great livings may really be the world can only judge of from report; becauſe though it is cuſtomary to inſert the value in the public account of diſpenſations, yet in this particular caſe it was not done.

good temporal fortune, had an income from two livings of 800l. per Annum, I believe it will be allowed that it would be a bad reaſon for Him.

Now pray, my Lord, let me aſk you, what we are to think of all this. When the Biſhop publiſhed ſo ſtrict a charge againſt non-reſidence, was it poſſible to ſuppoſe, that in about three months after, he would confer a benefice upon his Chaplain, which hath always been thought of the firſt conſequence in the Kingdom, upon which every Rector hath been reſident ever ſince the revolution, and that this chaplain ſhould abſent himſelf from both that, and his other cure, the greateſt part of the year, without the "letter of the law to ſcreen "himſelf under."

When great men lay themſelves thus open, the world, my Lord, will talk, and talk freely too; and it is a Tax upon their ſuperiority, however they may flatter themſelves to the contrary, from which they will never get exempted.

Beſides what I have already mentioned to your Lordſhip, it is ſaid, and very rightly, "that if the "abſence of a pariſh prieſt is to be ſupplied by a "curate to officiate for him, that it is much more "reaſonable and important, and as much the ca-"non and ſtatute law, that the incapacity of a "Biſhop

" Biſhop ſhould be ſupplied by a Suffragan, or Co-
" adjutor: that the obligation of Biſhops to all the
" parts and conſequences of their duty, and par-
" ticularly as to reſidence, is far greater than that
" of the inferior clergy; inaſmuch as the right diſ-
" charge of their office, is of greater concern to
" the good of the church, and is alſo impoſed on
" THEM by *divine inſtitution*.".

We are told in the Biſhop's charge, that " reſi-
" dence is of no value but for the ſake of perform-
" ing the duty:" and if a clergyman of the dio-ceſe of London, though always reſident, was by age or infirmities rendered unable to diſcharge the duty of his cure, it would avail him but little, I believe, with his dioceſan, to plead as an excuſe that the duty was not performed at all, that he was reſident on his living. As criminal it is they ſay therefore in the eye of the world, if not in the eye of the law both of the Church and Realm, for a Biſhop who is diſabled, though he reſides within his dioceſe, not to procure a Coadjutor or a ſuffragan Biſhop to do his duty. The world, my Lord, do make applications of this argument in a way that you muſt have heard of; and which it is needleſs therefore for me to repeat: but in general, your Lordſhip will perceive, that all which has been

advanced by the Biſhop in this learned charge, is retorted again upon him by thoſe whom it offends.

I flatter myſelf however that I have not repreſented any fact untruly. I can ſolemnly affirm that I did not intend it; and if I have urged the Truth with a decent freedom, the Biſhop's own example will bear me out. Upon the whole I hope I have made it appear to your Lordſhip's ſatisfaction, that a non-reſident Rector or Vicar, even whether he has a legal diſpenſation, or has not, is not criminal from the nature of his office, or from the *meaning* of the *Canon* or *Statute* enjoining reſidence; provided he has a proper ſubſtitute in his ſtead, and is himſelf employed always in ſome church or other. This is what I undertook, in behalf of ſuch of my Brethren of the Clergy, who conſtantly do duty tho' not in their own cures. As to thoſe who live in idleneſs and luxury, and who do little or nothing in their office but fatten on its emoluments, I think them uſeleſs and unprofitable Drones; and ſhall leave them to the juſt correction of the Biſhops, who, I hope, will unite in putting all the laws in execution againſt them.

But before I take leave of your Lordſhip and my ſubject, I will juſt preſume to ſuggeſt, that there is in my opinion a much more likely method of procuring

curing the Reſidence of the Clergy, than any canons or ſtatutes, or any thing elſe that I have yet ſeen publiſhed on this head. The Biſhop, I believe, is certainly in the right, where he ſays that "had the Clergy been always obliged to live in "their own houſes, they would at leaſt have been "duly repaired, and probably long before this "much improved, and rendered convenient habi-"tations.——But in the condition things now are, "it would be thought hard to drive a miniſter and "his Family to live in a wretched cottage; or to "put him under the neceſſity of building a new "houſe, to the ruin and impoveriſhment of him-"ſelf and Family ‡." Let me juſt obſerve to your Lordſhip, before I proceed, that it appears from the former part of this quotation, that the Clergy have not always been obliged to live in their own houſes; from whence we may conclude, I think, that notwithſtanding the *Letter* of canons and ſtatutes, which the Biſhop of London ſeems willing to revive, all other Biſhops have found that perpetual reſidence, in the preſent ſtate of the Church of England, is an airy project, impracticable and unjuſt. To eſtabliſh this concluſion however, was

‡ Charge, p. 32.

not the purpoſe for which I quoted the words above. I quoted them only to ſhew the probability, that if conſtant reſidence would have produced good and convenient habitations, then good and convenient habitations would as naturally produce reſidence: and perhaps there is not any One cauſe ſo productive of non-reſidence, as the wretched cottages his Lordſhip ſpeaks of for Glebe-houſes. The Biſhop aſks, "What then is to be done? "Ought the Ordinary to ſuffer things to go on in "the preſent courſe from bad to worſe? Ought "the Clergy to deſire it? What reaſon can any "man give now to excuſe himſelf from being put "to charge in repairing his Glebe-houſe, that will "not be as ſtrong, or ſtronger, in the mouth of "his Succeſſor ‡?" This is an evil his Lordſhip owns which there ſeems to be no other equitable means left to remedy, but that preſcribed by the injunctions of Edward VIth and Queen Elizabeth, ——a fifth part of the yearly revenue——but which he thinks at the ſame time "the law does not com-"pel incumbents to ſubmit to; and yet ſomething "of this ſort, he ſays, within the bounds of equity "ſhould be done."

‡ Charge, p. 32, 33.

I will

I will tell the Biſhop and your Lordſhip, what I think may, and what ſhould be done, in order to procure convenient habitations ſuitable to the benefices; and which in my opinion would be moſt likely to produce the Reſidence of the Clergy. Let us paſs an act of Parliament, compelling every patron of a living, where the Biſhop ſhall certify on the report of the Arch-deacon and the Church-wardens of the pariſh, that the Glebe-houſe is uninhabitable by an incumbent, to refrain from preſenting a Clerk for one whole year after the avoidance; the neat profits of which ſhall be ſequeſter'd by the Church-wardens, and laid out at the direction of the next Incumbent, on the Parſonage or Vicarage-houſe.

Nothing is eaſier than for a Biſhop to know the ſtate of every ſuch houſe within his Dioceſe: and if a whole year's rent was thought too much in many inſtances, it might be left to his direction to allot what part of it he thought neceſſary. Theſe are only the general Outlines of ſuch a Bill, which would require many other little regulations to fill it up, and which may be made without any difficulty: and this in one age would put all our Glebe-houſes on a very reſpectable footing, and bid fairer

for attaining Reſidence than the Canons and Statutes already made.

Having given this hint to thoſe whom it may concern, I ſhall put an end to your Lordſhip's trouble at this time, and to that of,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Oct. 2d, 1759. Moſt obedient and

Moſt obliged humble Servant,

R. JOHNSON.